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# Meese, Citing Spy Case, Presses for Death Penalty

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 3 — Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d said in remarks released today that the Reagan Administration would cite the case of a purported Navy spy ring in pressing for quick passage of a bill to reinstate the Federal death penalty.

In an interview, he said the Administration had noted the case of John A. Walker Jr. and three others charged in recent letters to lawmakers on Capitol Hill, urging them to support the bill. The bill would permit the execution of spies, airline hijackers and Presidential assassins, among others.

While questioning the need for some anti-espionage legislation now before Congress, Mr. Meese urged tighter restrictions on the use of classified Government documents.

In his first extended public comments about the case, Mr. Meese said that the arrest of Mr. Walker, a retired Navy chief warrant officer, his son, and two other retired Navy men on charges of passing secrets to the Soviet Union had heightened awareness of the dangers of espionage.

## 'Makes You Stand Up and Think'

"Most people hadn't thought about it before," he said. "This case makes you stand up and think." The Walker case has been described by Government officials as the most damaging spy case uncovered in this country in 30 years.

Mr. Meese made the statements in an interview Tuesday with reporters from The New York Times, asking that his comments in the wide-ranging discussion not be published. He agreed today to permit his remarks about the spy case to be quoted in print.

Espionage laws have included a death penalty provision for years, but the Supreme Court has held that the provision was unconstitutional because it provided too much discretion in sentencing.

Mr. Meese supports a death penalty bill sponsored by Senator Strom Thurmond, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, that seeks to overcome the Court's objections by limiting discretion. "We already have a death penalty," Mr. Meese said. "What we need is a process for carrying it out."

## Weinberger Names Commission

Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger said last month that Mr. Walker and his associates "should be shot" if convicted. He noted, however, that a death penalty law could not be applied retroactively in the Walker case.

In another development today, Mr. Weinberger named 14 intelligence specialists to a commission that will recommend ways to control military secrets in light of the Walker case. Retired Army Gen. Richard Stillwell, a former Under Secretary of Defense, will lead the panel.

In the interview, Mr. Meese questioned the need for some of the anti-espionage bills that have been prompted by the spy case.

Last week, the House overwhelmingly adopted an amendment that would permit the Pentagon to expand the use of polygraphs, or lie detector tests, to expose spies, but Mr. Meese said that current laws gave the Government sufficient power to perform the tests.

He made no direct comment on another measure passed last week in the House that would permit the execution of military officials convicted of espionage in peacetime. He seemed to indicate, however, that the amendment would be redundant if the Congress adopted the bill sponsored by Mr. Thurmond, a South Carolina Republican.

It would allow the Government to execute people convicted of espionage, airline hijacking, murder on Federal property and attempts to assassinate

the President, including cases in which the President was not killed.

Meanwhile, a Federal judge in Baltimore said today that the espionage trial of John Walker, who has been accused of forming the spy ring, and his son, Michael, would begin on Oct. 28. Michael, a Navy yeoman, has been charged with smuggling secret documents to his father.

Samuel W. Meekins, a lawyer for Arthur Walker, filed a motion in Federal District Court in Norfolk, Va., today urging a judge to suppress statements that Mr. Walker made during several days of questioning by F.B.I. agents.

Federal officials have described the statements, which were made before his arrest on May 29, as a confession.